

## The Love of Jesus

### John 15:9-17

A teacher gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: "My full name has 6 letters. The first one is M. I am strong and attractive. I pick up things. Who am I?" When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word "Mother."

"I love her because she gives me hugs, kisses and cereal and is as beautiful as a shooting star. And she tells me to be careful wearing socks on the stairs. You could slip!" —*Alice, age 4*

"My mom always helps me and she taught me not to play with sharp knives." —*Charlie, age 9*

"She works really hard to take care of us and then she works just as hard to make other children healthy too. And she told us to wear sunglasses when you chop onions!" —*Pearce, age 8*

"My mom is 39!!! And she is still ALIVE!!!" —*Dawn*

"My dad is bigger than my mom, but she's the boss." —*Krys*

#### How did God make mothers?

Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring. He made my Mom just the same as he made me. He just used some bigger parts.

#### Why did God make mothers?

Mainly to clean the house. She's the only one who knows where to find the scotch tape.

#### Why did God give you your mother and not somebody else's mom?

God knew she likes me a lot more than other kid's moms like me.

#### What kind of little girl was your mother?

I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be she was pretty bossy.

#### What ingredients does God use to make mothers?

They get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.

God makes mothers out of angel hair and clouds everything nice in the world, and one dab of mean.

#### How did your mother meet your dad?

Mommy was working in a store and daddy was shoplifting.

#### Who's the boss around your house?

My mom doesn't want to be the boss, but she has to because my dad's such a goofball.

Mom. You can tell by how she does room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.

#### What does your mother do in her spare time?

To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.

Mothers don't do spare time.

#### What's the difference between dads and moms?

Dads are stronger and taller, but moms have the real power cause that's who you gotta ask if you want to sleep over at your friend's.

Moms know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.

#### Describe the world's greatest mother?

She would make broccoli taste like ice cream!

#### Is there anything about your mother that's perfect?

Her casserole recipes. But we hate them.

Her teeth are perfect, but she bought them from the dentist.

Just her children.

#### What would it take to make your mother perfect?

You know, her hair. I'd dye it, maybe blue.

On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.

#### If you could change one thing about your mother, what would it be?

I'd make my mother smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.

She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.

"I kinda like everything about her!" —*Cooper, age 7*

Leatha Brown wrote the following poem:

A mother's love is a wonderful package from heaven with special care.

A mother's love is like no other love that you can compare.

A mother's love is purified by angels and flows directly from her soul.

A mother's love is justified by God, and by His hands He created the mold.

This mold that was shaped and fashioned by God has endured the test of time.

This mold that was taped and recorded by women rang out like a heavenly chime.

A mother's love is unconditional, and from her heart this can be told.

A mother's love is nutritional; it is the fruit that feeds our soul.

A mother's love 'IS' true love, and from her heart she cannot lie.

A mother's love is eternal, the kind that won't die.

A mother's love is the tie that binds, and her bond can never be broken.

A mother's love is branded in our hearts, even when her words aren't spoken.

I don't know if it's true or not, but someone has estimated that there over 100 million love songs. I wonder how many of them are about mothers. If you consider the love of a mother, I think you come pretty close to the ideal of unconditional love. It's the love Jesus models for us and the topic of our message and passage. Follow as I read our text.

### John 15:9-17

If we are going to understand the love of Jesus, we need to begin with a definition. Let's first talk about the meaning of Jesus's love.

## I. THE MEANING OF JESUS'S LOVE

The dictionary defines it as a deep feeling of affection. B.J. Thomas sang about that kind of love:

*I'm hooked on a feeling*

*High on believing*

*That you're in love with me*

Another defines love as a set of emotions and behaviors characterized by intimacy, passion, and commitment. It involves care, closeness, protectiveness, attraction, affection, and trust. Love can vary in intensity and can change over time.

Those are all well and good, but it misses the heart of the kind of love referred to in the Bible, especially the love that Jesus both talks about and models as a part of His character because His love never changes.

Unlike the English language which only has one word for love, the Greek language uses three different words to define love.

In English we use the word love to describe how we feel about pizza, watching a ballet, a recent vacation, the affection we have for our pet or spouse or the new car we just bought. Now in all fairness we generally don't love pizza in the same way we love a child or our spouse, at least I hope not, but still using the same word to describe our feeling about both may be hard to distinguish.

The word used for the type of love Jesus has is not the same kind of love used to describe romantic love, like what Elizabeth Barrett Browning describes in her poem "How do I love thee, let me count the ways."

It's not the word used to describe a close friendship like that of David and Johnathan.

The kind of love Jesus demonstrates speaks of goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of love. Where the other two ebb and flow depending on changing circumstances or feelings this kind of love is not based on that. It is always the same and it is always unconditional.

This kind of love includes faithfulness, commitment and is an act of the will. GotQuestions says this love is "distinguished from the other types of love by its lofty moral nature and strong character, beautifully described in **I Corinthians 13.**" While it's a great passage to read at weddings, it isn't just for believers to practice toward one another. It is the essence and very nature of Christ. This is the love He had with the Father and what led Him to obey and come to earth. It is the same love He has for us.

The majority of times it is used in the New Testament it describes love that is of God and love that comes from God. **I John 4:8 "God is love."** That doesn't mean that God merely loves, but that He **IS** love. Everything that God does – His justice, forgiveness, grace, mercy, and so on – flow from His nature of love. God's love isn't some gushy, slushy feeling, but one that is His nature.

This agape love is a love toward the unlovable. It's a love that loves not because it is deserved. It's not

something earned. It isn't because there is something within us that is inherently loveable or worthy of His love. It's not even because we possess some skill. The love that God is and that God shows is because it is His nature to love in this way and at all times. He can love us no other way. This love isn't just a thing, it is evident in action, by what it does and is most clearly seen in the cross.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** “God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loves us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.”

We didn't deserve that sacrifice, but His love moved Him to act on our behalf. As I said, this love is unmerited, and seeks the best for those who are the object of His love even if we reject it. That is the meaning of Jesus's love.

Consider next, the motivation of Jesus's love.

## II. THE MOTIVATION OF JESUS'S LOVE – vv. 9-12

Notice first, the Character of Jesus's love.

### A. The Character Of Jesus's Love – v. 9

Jesus says the Father loves Him and then adds that the way the Father loves Him is the same way He loves us. **Philippians 2:8** tells us that Jesus is God in His nature. What we said two weeks ago about the compassion being the same for Jesus as it was for God since they have the same nature can be said about their love. There is no difference. Jesus's love for us is the same as God's love us.

His love for us is the same. It won't change. It won't get better over time. It isn't conditional. It's not past tense in the sense that where He once loved us, He no longer does or where He once loved us less He now loves us more. And neither is His love something that is reserved for a future time. This love is in the present tense. “I love you now, and will keep on loving you the same tomorrow and the next day and the next year and forever.”

**Jeremiah 31:3** “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Past, present, and future.

The love Jesus has for us is patterned after the love the Father has for Him both in its quality and its extent. He will never love us less and He can never love us more than He already does. Jesus loves us the way the Father loves Him. How much does Jesus love us? As much and in the same way the Father loves Him. That love is without beginning and without end. That is the measure of His love. Though we shouldn't do it just to see if it's true, no matter what we do, His love for us will never change. But just remember that everything He does is measured by His love. That not only includes His mercy, it also includes His discipline and judgment.

If we aren't convinced, just consider the 12 men He called to be His disciples.

Jesus loved them even though they argued on more than one occasion about who was the greatest among them.

Jesus loved Peter even though at times he spoke without thinking. He even loved Peter just the same after his denial.

After being rudely treated in Samaria, Jesus still loved James and John who wanted to call down fire to destroy the people who opposed them.

Peter, James and John would fall asleep when Jesus asked them to watch and pray in His time of greatest need and Jesus still loved them.

Simon was a zealot, an insurrectionist, part of a group that wanted to violently overthrow Rome.

Matthew was a despised tax collector.

Nathanael was a skeptic.

Thomas was a doubter.

Judas would betray Him.

Yet Jesus called them and loved them just the same.

His actions and attitudes toward us are consistent with His nature. He and the Father are the same in character and so He can act no differently. That is the character of His love.

Next, we see the compliance of Jesus's love.

### B. The Compliance Of Jesus's Love – v. 10

**What is the evidence of love Jesus shows us here?** It is in His complete obedience in doing the will of the Father. When you read through the Gospel of John,

you cannot help but notice the emphasis he places on the obedience of Jesus to the Father's will.

**John 5:30 "I seek not to please Myself but Him who sent me."**

**John 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me."**

**John 17:4 "I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do."**

**John 19:30 "When He had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."**

Crying out "it is finished" wasn't just to indicate that the payment for sin was completed. It also signified that He had done everything out of complete obedience that the Father had asked Him to do. He did nothing less and could do nothing else because He did all the Father asked of Him.

**John 14:31 "The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me."** That is love.

His obedience to the Father was first shown in His coming to earth as a newborn baby. Here is the Son of God, existing in eternity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit but willingly leaving the divine glory that He had known from eternity past to enter into our time and space. He came to earth out of love and obedience to the Father and out of love for mankind in order to pay the penalty for our sin. The sinless one taking on the sins of others to take our punishment by dying on the cross for our salvation.

**How do we know Jesus loved the Father?**

It's in His obedience to the Father.

**How do we know Jesus loves us?**

It's in His obedience to the Father.

**But you might ask why He would do that for us?**

It's in the concern of Jesus's love.

### **C. The Concern Of Jesus's Love**

I think the concern expressed by Jesus's love is found in **Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man came**

**to seek and to save what was lost."**

He didn't just obey the will of the Father by coming to earth only to go to the cross. His concern for the lost took Him to where the lost were.

After Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, Matthew hosted a big party for all his tax-collecting buddies. The Bible also describes them as sinners. Jesus was invited to the party as well. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples why Jesus chose to eat with sinners, with reprobates, with the deplorables. When He heard their question, He said that **"It isn't the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"** insinuating that He didn't come to hang around those who considered themselves self-righteous, but those who actually needed spiritual healing.

It's all too easy to love those who look like us, look like us, smell like us, talk like us, act like us. But Jesus's love took Him to where sinners were, those who were the socially outcast.

He talked with a woman who had been married five times and was living with a man not her husband. He stopped under a Sycamore tree to talk with Zacchaeus, a tax collector.

A woman caught in the act of adultery was brought to Him to see if He would condemn her. Instead He challenged her to go and no longer sin.

He had an encounter with Mary Magdalene from whom He cast out seven demons.

He loved Peter who would deny Him.

He even loved someone who would betray Him.

The love of Jesus compelled Him to seek the sinner, to be concerned about their eternal destiny, and to be concerned enough to do something about it so that they wouldn't die in their sins.

He left the splendor of heaven

Knowing His destiny

Was the lonely hill of Golgotha

There to lay down His life for me

If that isn't love

Then the ocean is dry

There's no stars in the sky

And the sparrows can't fly

If that isn't love

Then heaven's a myth  
 There's no feeling like this  
 If that isn't love

Even in death he remembered  
 The thief hanging by His side  
 Then He spoke of love and compassion  
 And He took him to paradise

If that isn't love  
 Then the ocean is dry  
 There's no stars in the sky  
 And the sparrows can't fly  
 If that isn't love  
 Then heaven's a myth  
 There's no feeling like this  
 If that isn't love

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The essence of **Luke 19:10** is that Jesus loves every kind of sinner. **Do we?** Which brings us to the next part of our passage where we see the command from Jesus's love.

#### **D. The Command From Jesus's Love – v. 12** **“My commandment is this: love each other as I have loved you.”**

In the same way the Father loves the Son, the Son loves us. In the same way the Son loves us, we are to love one another.

There are to be no exceptions.

There are to be no exclusions.

There are to be no excuses.

But I will be the first to admit that it can be difficult to love some people. But I will also admit that's why God's Spirit must be the one through whom I love others. After all, it is His character fruit of divine love that He wants to develop in us if we will let Him do His work in us. I can't love others the way that Jesus intends for me to love them without His help. It won't happen. That's why Peter had such a hard time at first going to the home of Cornelius who was a Gentile. It took a vision from God to convince him that even the people who were considered unclean needed to be shown and shared the love of Christ.

For those who came Friday night and watched *The Jesus Revolution*, you know how difficult it was at first for Pastor Chuck Smith to love hippies. In time he came to love them and open his church to them when others in the church and every other church were repulsed by them and rejected them.

We are called and commanded to love others in the same way Jesus loves us. To love them unconditionally. To show love to others, even to the socially outcast and unwanted people.

**Who do I need to love?**

**Whom do you need to love?**

**Is it the drug addict?**

**Is it the alcoholic?**

**Is it the person with all the tattoos or piercings?**

**Is it the person with different political or religious or philosophical views?**

**Is it the atheist?**

**Is it the neighbor who screams at their children?**

**Is it the person who slanders us?**

**Is it the boss who belittles us or the coworker who smears us?**

Our command is to love them as Jesus loves us. John puts it plainly in **I John 4:8(-21)** that whoever does not love others does not know God. **Verse 17** says that if we love others as Jesus loves us, we are like Him. **How can we say we love God if we don't love others?** Our command from Jesus's love for us is to love others.

We briefly looked at the meaning of Jesus's love.

We took a bit more time talking about the motivation of Jesus's love. Let's close by considering the measure of Jesus's love.

### **III. THE MEASURE OF JESUS'S LOVE – vv. 13-17**

His love is seen in selflessness toward us.

#### **A. His Selflessness Toward Us**

Jesus never once thought about Himself. Our wellbeing was foremost on His mind. He could hardly get a moments rest. People followed Him wherever He went. They sought Him out. His meals were interrupted.

His teaching was interrupted.

His sleep was interrupted.

No wonder His mother and siblings thought He was out of His mind crazy and wanted to pull Him away from the madness. But Jesus knew His time was short and the need was great. His love was evident in His selflessness.

**Philippians 2:5-8** speaks to His selflessness.

He gave up the glory of heaven.

He gave up the continuous praise of the angels.

In humility, He gave that up to come to earth, to know hunger and thirst and pain and ridicule and rejection and death.

Yet in His selflessness, He came, as Philippians describes, as a servant to us.

## B. His Service To Us

**Mark 10:45** “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.”

Think of some of the ways Jesus served others.

He fed multitudes.

He healed many.

He washed dirty feet.

The love He commands us to have for others includes serving them, serving those who can't do anything in return or who won't acknowledge our actions, people who need to be shown Jesus's love.

The love of Christ is often better seen through our actions than through our words. How we serve becomes the platform through which we can speak about Christ and His loving sacrifice for us.

## C. His Sacrifice For Us – v. 13

Chuck Colson once told the story of a group of American prisoners of war during World War II. They were made to do hard labor in a prison camp. Each prisoner had a shovel and would dig all day. At the end of the day each prisoner had to give an account of his tool in the evening. One evening 20 prisoners lined up and the shovels were all counted. The guard counted 19 shovels. He turned in rage to the 20 prisoners demanding to know which one did not bring his shovel back. No one responded. The

guard took out his gun and said that he would shoot five men if the guilty prisoner did not step forward. After a moment of tense silence, a 19-year-old soldier stepped forward with his head bowed down. The guard grabbed him, took him to the side and shot him dead and turned to warn the others that they better be more careful than he was. When he left, the men counted the shovels and there were 20. The guard had miscounted, and the young soldier had given his life for his friends.

John Piper puts it into perspective. “Imagine the emotions that must have filled their hearts as they knelt by the body. In the seconds of silence, he had weighed out his whole future in the balance – a future wife, an education, a new truck, children, a career, fishing with his dad – and he chose death so that others might live. To love in the extent that Jesus loves is to choose suffering for the sake of another.”

Jesus says in this verse that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Paul tells us in **Romans 5:8** that God showed His love for us by sending His Son to die for us while we were still His enemies. That verse also implies that Jesus loves us by willingly doing the will of the Father by going to the cross for us. He died so that others would live.

**I Peter 2:24** “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds we are healed.”

**I Peter 3:18** “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” If that isn't love.

Tony Evans writes that “love is the decision to compassionately, righteously, responsibly, and sacrificially seek the wellbeing of another... Love is not dependent on feelings: It is not driven by feelings. It is driven by sacrifice for the wellbeing of others.” And that's exactly what Jesus did for us.

There is a simplistic beauty in the words of the song many of us learned as children. Sing it with me.  
Jesus loves me this I know,

For the Bible tells me so,  
Little ones to Him belong,  
They are weak, but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me”  
The Bible tells me so.

### Do you believe He loves you?

When it comes to remembering that Jesus loves us,  
let me quote that famous cartoon character, Quick  
Draw McGraw “And don’t you forget it.”

Here’s another chorus you may remember.  
Isn’t the love of Jesus something wonderful,  
wonderful, wonderful,  
Oh, isn’t the love of Jesus something wonderful.  
Wonderful it is to me.

The love of Jesus cost Him. He willingly, gladly,  
obediently went to the cross to die for each of us.  
That love provides for us what we don’t deserve.  
That love gives us what we could never afford or  
earn or pay back.

That love deserves our praise.  
That love deserves our obedience.  
That love deserves our allegiance.  
There were many people in Jesus’s day who felt  
unloved and unwanted.  
The lepers whom Jesus healed.  
The blind and diseased and demoniacs whom He  
touched.  
He went to the hated and despised.  
He died for the unrighteous and the last I checked,  
that included everyone of us.

Let us not forget that we are forever loved and that  
His love will never fail or falter.

**Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that  
neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any  
power, neither height nor depth, nor anything  
else in all creation, will be able to separate us  
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our  
Lord.”**

Let Paul’s prayer in **Ephesians 3:16-19** be my

prayer for you as well: **“I pray that out of His  
glorious riches He may strengthen you with  
power through His Spirit in your inner being, so  
that Christ may dwell in your hearts through  
faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and  
established in love, may have power, together  
with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long  
and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to  
know this love that surpasses knowledge – that  
you may be filled to the measure of all the  
fullness of God.”**

### Do you know the love of Christ?

Have you experienced His love by accepting His  
gift of salvation for which He willingly and  
obediently sacrificed Himself for you on account of  
your sin?

### Do you really know the depth of His love for you?

If you want to know the depth and degree of Jesus’s  
love, all you have to do is look at the cross and you  
will see the meaning, the motivation and the  
measure of His love for you.

It’s a love that will never diminish.

Out of all the millions of love songs that have been  
recorded, you really only need to know two:

**Jesus loves me.**

and

**Isn’t the love of Jesus something wonderful!**